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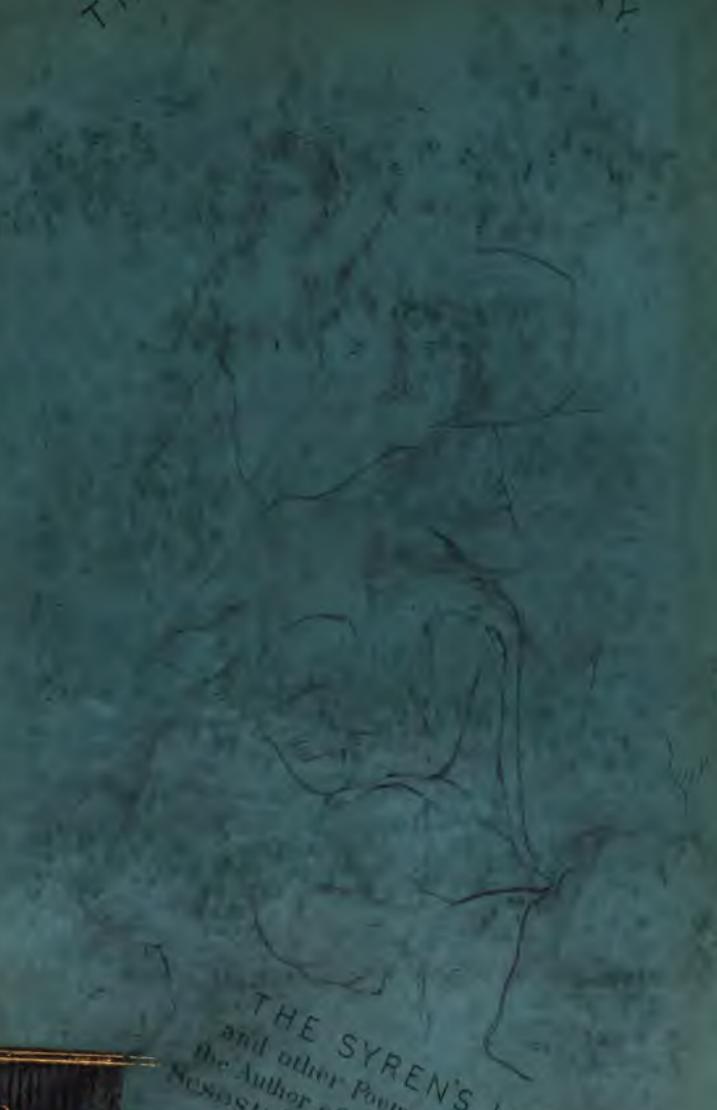
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Present

THE TITANS OF TO DAY



THE SYREN'S ISLE  
and other Poems by  
the Author of  
Mesopotamia.

280. s.

44.



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THE  
TITANS OF TO-DAY,  
AND  
OTHER POEMS.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF  
SESOSTRIS.

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LONDON:  
HOPE & CO., 16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1854.

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LONDON:

HOPE AND CO., PRINTERS, 16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

When my tired thoughts have travelled east and west,  
Through many a mine, the purest ore to prove,  
How sweet it is to call them down, and rest  
Their drooping pinions in the shades of Love.  
Then, Lady-Muse, believ't, if I aspire  
To pay thee homage in a verse so weak,  
It is as much to quench my fond desire,  
As that thy praise my grateful tongue should speak.  
Yet for the sweet gifts proffered from thy shrine  
I am so much thy debtor, that I think  
No other charms can ever banish thine,  
And cause my now-admiring eyes to blink ;  
But if some other beauty check this pride,  
And kill the self-reproach of being too fond,  
Thou wilt forgive me, for I think, when tried,  
Each to the other's service will respond,  
Her charms will yield a happy theme for song,  
And thou'l make richer what to them belong.



## THE TITANS OF TO-DAY.

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*It is impossible at this time to contemplate the position and prospects of Old World civilization, and the powerful menace which at the hand of the Demigod of the North is virtually directed against it, without experiencing that occasional momentary stillness of the heart, which is the sure sign that an important future hath seized upon and mastered its expectation. Whatever be the pretext, and whatever the nominal subject-matter of contention, let the scabbard once be thrown away, and we shall surely have to abide the issue of success or defeat to one of the two great principles of despotism or of constitutional liberty; and although the result in a world the scheme of which is one of indefinite progress, cannot be doubtful, still it is not less certain, that years, nay, perhaps centuries of retardation may be the unhappy consequence of protracted war. In the following piece my desire has been to personify the principles, the shadows of whose mighty struggling are now so*

*thickly falling amongst us ; and the object of this short Introduction is in some measure to redeem it from that charge of obscurity (if such there be) which I fear too justly hangs over much of the poetry of the present hour.*

Come with me, friends, and I will show you Love—  
A leap to thunder-cloud-land, through the stars,  
And past the boldest comet-ranger ; Lo !  
The central and the satellite suns are gone,  
Their rays exhausted, sunk in space, and died,  
Ere thrice had pulsed our brain ; alone, unsphered,  
And breathless, we o'er ocean-chaos hang,  
With awe not fear. ' No fear with God and Love !

Boundless the sounding swell of our vast sea,  
Tumultuous, fathomless, with column'd gleams  
Of light, we know not whence, mysterious, wild,  
And shadowed as with outstretched wings of gods  
Struggling to giant life, amidst the roar  
Of thunder, pealing—Whence, and whither ? Hark !  
Creation hath another throe to-day.

And what are these ? The gods whose lightning thoughts  
Control our world ; as if the Limitless Power,  
That gave to man some scope for his free will,  
Now rolled itself back from a loftier sphere,  
And thus consigned his world to less than God,  
Mighty not mightiest, good but not the best,

And hence imperfect and akin to pain.  
Lo ! where they stand, sublime in power and pride,  
Starring their mighty fronts, and looking rule  
To the farthest isles of space, the glowing worlds  
Of suns and satellites ; their ample thrones  
Inlaid with lightning, and with fallen stars  
That from their spheres have plunged to chaos back  
In glowing embers ; side by side they stand,  
Thus side by side that from our sun a ray  
Might join them in an age, but some are there  
Who, front to front, glare to the deepest soul,  
And, with the lightning furies of a glance,  
Explode the surcharged air. Peal rides on peal.

Lo ! the spread winds roll back a heaven of clouds,  
And from his vast throne, draped with thunder-falls,  
Uprisen a king-god stands,\* with outstretched arm,  
And hand that could have clutched and crushed a star,  
Seconds the shot defiance of his eye.  
Splendour and Beauty were to him as slaves  
Uplooking for his smile ; but through all smiles  
Reflecting his, the palsy lines of fear  
Trace their distorting course ; a blazing crown,  
Living with light, is on his brow ; a chain  
Of coronets round his neck ; and at his side  
Lie sceptres sidling swords, so ranged ye doubted  
Which were the weapon ; and above his head

\* The Genius of Despotism:

Rolls a vast canopied vapour, where his form,  
A vaster shadow from the light of pride,  
Hangs ever o'er him, and to himself presents  
The master-lines of being ; but cold, alone,  
The baleful centre of a barren sphere,  
His heart hath nought to feed on save itself,  
And its factitious cravings.

Hark ! with voice  
That rends the thunders, as a shepherd's pipe  
Is swallowed by the clang of brazen trumps  
Bellowing a desperate charge, aloud he cries  
To one more ancient, of majestic mien,  
But yet whose brow no crown, but locks of gray,  
Massively frame, and who with sullen eye  
(Sullen to meet the oppression he abhors,  
Even as old Saturn at the scoff of Jove),  
Unquailing, flings the scorn, like broken waves,  
Back on their ocean-sire ; he knew not fear  
To use it, or to feel. Thus the king spake,  
In words whose echoes boomed upon my heart,  
And shook these petty leaves of language down  
On a love-hungering soil :—

“Rebel accurst,  
Thy thoughts have been like jags of iron thrown  
Amongst the wheels of the world, my petted Isle,  
Where man, the nursling of Eternity,  
Flaunts his flesh robes, and arrogates to-day ;  
Why hast thou dared to toil beneath the base

Of that bright pile where kings are pinnacles,  
 And lengthened lines of noble races make  
 Rich tracery on the front !—That world is mine,  
 Its human greatness is of me compact,  
 The sure result of that well-ordered rule,  
 Which forces out from each all each can yield  
 For one vast end, though by itself unseen.  
 What though the toiling peasant in the vale  
 Cannot behold the star,—shines it less bright ?  
 Is it less portion of the universe ?  
 And claims its beauty less the meed of praise ?  
 I made him not, this man, nor his fool thoughts,  
 And madly charging passions ; what he is  
 I take up like a shell upon his shores,  
 Uncaring where it grew ; success is god,  
 No matter whence or how, 'tis in the fane,  
 And I have led him to the very shrine ;  
 Where dost thou gaze along the range of the past  
 For the resting spots of Fame ? ”

“ *Where at the base*

*Most human hearts lie crushed, and oozing forth*  
*Their waste and blood-defiled affections, pour*  
*Into the black abyss of things forgot—,*  
 “ There let them rot ; the peaks alone I see,  
 All else is past”—.

“ *Immortals have no past,*  
*But live and move through all eternity*  
*Clothed with one vast to-day ; their cast off robes*

*Are in the grave, the spirit of their thought  
 And every petty act that scrapes the sand,  
 Ere to the eternal ocean they are drawn,  
 Is of their being an eversensitive part,  
 Vital beyond all change ; it shall, it must be,  
 Or God's eternal justice is a cheat,  
 And the great sphere that looks like endless love  
 Is cracked and hollow. Thine the world, and thine  
 Its human greatness ?—yes ; if human ills  
 Make up the great account : wars, tyrannies,  
 Voiceless oppressions squeezing out the life,  
 Swarm thick upon thee with the leprous stains  
 Now hid so bravely ;—thine, thou gorgeous lie—”*

That felon word struck shot-like to the brain,  
 And every fibre like a falling oak  
 Shook to the farthest atoms of his frame,  
 And fury tore the sinews of his face  
 To fierce distortion, and the deep white heat  
 Glared terribly—an ice-god struck to fire.

*“ Alas the splendours on the starry brow  
 When the foul cavernous heart is dripp'd with ice,  
 And gnawn and eaten by a thousand sins !  
 Thy bright crown arches o'er a blckened flood,  
 Thick with corruption ; glimmers from decay  
 Are thy uncertain glories ; pools of blood  
 Have fed the roots of thy most palmy groves,  
 And thy triumphal arches' hot cement  
 Hath thence been moistened. Peace thou canst not love,*

*For peace will surely join both hearts and hands  
Until the bright belt stretches round the world  
Thick strewn with pearls of love and charity."*

"Melt me such pearls in grand Ambition's cup,  
And I will drink them though they turn to fire.  
Know'st thou the jets that in man's lake of time  
Seem Isles and landmarks ? Are not all their names  
The very symbols of concentrated power—  
Of grandeur, force, and greatness else unknown,  
And weak in many but a mighty one ?"

*"Mighty to rapine, mighty to revenge,  
Mighty to falsehood, bigotry, and woe !  
I tell thee, sceptred-power, I love the race  
Which thou the child of false desert must scorn,  
Knowing how much thy sacrifice ascends  
From base idolatry. Oh, for the heart  
Where truth's a canker!"*—

And with equal eye  
And equal front uprose the crownless one  
And rested on his heart ; he knew the plunge  
Was near, and roused his hope ; and thick from far  
Rushed, like a bursting ocean, hosts that ranged  
Their arms on either side ; high crested these  
With all the fervour of enduring pride  
That breeds the hollow consciousness of worth,  
And thence in turn is nourished, feeding thus  
On its own flesh, and with incestuous lust  
Gendering a monstrous brood—look in their hearts,

Hating each other ; hating most the power  
That fetters them to hatred, but whose fear  
Forces their sick lives in one common mould,  
And makes one bed suit all ;\* and these distract  
Fierce and revengeful, gnashing their own jaws  
With fitful ire, but safe as rooted oaks  
Clutched in the soil. A peal of horror roll'd  
O'er all their heads, its lightnings were the eyes  
That shot defiance o'er the vast abyss.

Wild shrieks from dungeon depths, sighs from lost  
homes,  
Revengeful curses scathing black the heart  
From which they leap, and burning in the eyes

\* Our old friend Procrustes has a worthy successor in the despot of to-day. Like the cutting sea winds, that chill all growth the moment an aspiring plant strives to elevate itself above a certain low and sheltered level, despotism denies all open and healthy expansion of speculative research or experimental investigation, from the vital necessity it is under of maintaining a superiority amongst radical equals ; a result only to be produced in succession by the agency of force and cunning directed to the production and maintenance of inferiority in its victims. Hereditary caste and occupation are admirably well suited for this purpose, and though no doubt there are individuals who could not be better placed than under such a system (as we may presume there were some lieges of the exact dimensions of our friend above alluded to), still its manifestly stunting, setting aside its unworthily haphazard nature, clearly disqualifies it from holding a permanent place in a system where in all conscience we want all the progress we can obtain—a system of debased but highly endowed humanity.

Of those they strike, like liquid fire, despairs  
With hollow eyes, and hearts that live in death ;  
Corruption kneaded in the pristine life ;  
Vice like a black stain on an open brow  
Struck on fair youth ; and poverty ; and pain ;  
And ruin with distorted sides, and eyes  
Hollow as cast shells on a desolate shore :  
All these with hideous shape and dreary sound  
Crush in the air and stifle up the heart  
With expectation of some untold woe.

Laws must be forced upon evasive man,  
Not chosen ; and twice ten thousand voices cried  
For masters, and to drown each other's cry  
More fiercely shouted for the master's praise :  
*“God gave us freedom, man hath forged his chains,*  
*And man alone denies what God hath given.”*

And now they meet, nerved with unbounding hate,  
And fiercely hungered for each rival heart ;  
The thickening air grows sullen, and the night  
Shakes her vast shroud with horror and in fear  
She may not cover such a world of woe.  
They strike, peal sounds on peal, and blow meets blow,  
Like tilting planets in a field of air ;  
When lo ! the fearful change : Revenge and Pride,  
Fierce and hot glaring in each other's eyes,  
Back on their brains recoil, with horrid shrieks,  
For crackling up their sinews, seething blood,  
And hissing, to the marrow, fire, a hell

Dives inward and devours, till what were forms  
Like fire in fire are lost, and all is hell.  
Hell gleams upon the suns ; and at high noon  
A redder fierceness than of setting day  
Appals the hearts of men. But all's not yet  
For never are despair and death the end—  
Despair is human, mighty love divine.

O dark browed cavern, where the gems are formed  
Which Death, sure delver, puts in nobler hands,  
How soon the phantoms that suck out men's souls—  
Ambition, Envy, carking Avarice,  
Mistrust that hates itself and saddens most,  
With all the cross-bred monsters of their creeds,  
Shall stand revealed, and die of light and truth,  
When through thy rents and fissures shall shine in  
Th' immortal radiance of unclouded love—  
Creation's master soul, the heart of being,  
The sole quiescence, sole eternity.

And this must be ; for Power with all its worlds,  
And Wisdom, that points clear their mazy sweep,  
And Justice whose unerring balance turns  
At a sunbeam's weight, these are God's attributes ;  
But God is Love, and Love is very God.

Hence from the ashes of the crownless one,  
Pure for the birth of freedom and of bliss,  
The babe of mighty Love, that young immortal  
Arose, and looked a sunbeam on the world ;

Then danced the bright blood through the veins of men,  
And leaped the heart, and flashed the generous eye,  
And Hope, shrunk herald, died, without regret;  
For Prophet is not when the God hath come.



## P O E M S.

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### I.

#### TO HOPE.

Sweet flatterer, thou that mak'st all lovely things  
Thy words and phrases to beguile the mind,  
Till nought seems good but what the future brings,  
For ever brings, but never leaves behind,  
Come when thou wilt thou never com'st in vain ;  
I know the dead all mocked thee ere they died,  
Their past was too much hid by present pain,  
Or thy sweet gifts had ne'er been thus denied.  
Who on the wide earth, be he king or slave,  
An outcast churl, or from a palace sprung,  
Hath plucked a flower so sweet as that you gave  
When things had worth because their world was young ?

## II.

A shout for the Briton ! The Genius of Power  
Hath passed from the East where he stood in his prime,  
The Greek and the Roman have triumphed their hour,  
And stand in the distance with aspect sublime.  
And think not the boast is ungracious and vain,  
That the Briton shall form a bright link in the chain,  
When the dross shall descend to the earth whence it came,  
And his bright points emerge in the sunlight of fame.

Too near to this grandeur, discoloured we view  
Some rays which the distance of ages shall blend  
Into glory as bright, as unspotted, and true,  
As shall match with the best till such glories shall end.  
And if ever from Britain the sceptre shall pass,  
And her fair lands are till'd by the hands of a slave,  
(For thousands of years are but sands in the glass,  
And as sure as the cradle, so sure is the grave)  
With the chief of Earth's nations, the heirs of the free—  
Bright honour shall rest on us Lords of the Sea.

And oh, daughters of Britain, should Beauty descend  
Like an angel unfallen, perchance she might bend  
Her eyes on the East, where the maids are as fair  
As the half opened roses they twine with their hair ;

Their light for a moment on Georgia might fall,  
And linger where Helen deserted her hall ;  
But oh, what a start and a smile would there be—  
How soon she'd forget them, how swift she would flee  
To her daughters who dwell on the Isles of the Sea.

And a shout for the first of those daughters, the bride  
Whom the Islands have placed on the top of their pride,  
For a beacon whose fire shall direct every blow  
When the spite of the traitor is working below,  
And in letters of light on her standard unfurl'd  
Shall again show in Britain the hope of the world.

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## III.

## TO FANCY.

Oft hast thou borne me like a curious child  
Far from men's eyes when they might deem me nigh,  
And told me tales which as I heard I smiled,  
Or checked my mirth with wakening sympathy ;  
And all-beguiled I'd prattle in thine ear  
Of when young Time began to wing his flight,  
Searching through mists no sun of earth can clear  
To catch the aspect of some primal height.  
Contentless labour, better 'tis to bask

In pleasant sunshine, questionless of light,  
Than strain the orbs unfit for such keen task  
Till light's excess becomes unchanging night ;  
Then tell me tales that I may smile or weep,  
And not be thankless for a feeling mind,—  
The sweetest flowers can scarce do more than creep,  
And hence when oaks are torn lie safe behind.

---

## IV.

What would'st thou have ? Feed on high thoughts, and die  
Amid wild doubts in intellectual strife ;  
Or plunge thy head below the mystery  
Of this strange being, and live unprobing life ?  
Even then the forged desires which we must heave  
Into our minds lest they grow desolate,  
Content no more than sand can fill a sieve ;  
They touch the film and but the film of fate.  
Go think on what thou may'st be,—can't be here,  
And ask thyself the question, Wherefore this ?  
And the sole answer undefined and drear  
Will drop a bitter on thy dreams of bliss.  
I sometimes dread to think what I may be,  
So changed from what I am ; the world may cast

My mind anew, and make me wish to flee  
As a false hope the star that led my past.  
Yet not perchance less happy should I change ;  
Nay then I think I'd deem the change were well,  
Though from the present should I never range  
I'd deem that change a downward slope to hell.  
So the mind's formed by that which presses round,  
And each man thinks his own the rule of man,  
And what is right, and therefore from one ground  
I would an action bless, another ban.  
The boundless streams of wisdom, space, and time,  
Ere long shall draw my spirit in their flow,  
But He who set it in this wintry clime—  
He will protect it when I cease below.  
Death comes, it must come—and this frame shall be  
The trampled clod it hath been, but within  
I feel an awful hope that to be free  
From quick clod—bondage is a bliss to win ;  
Though what that bliss I know not, nor can know,  
Then with unconscious calm I dare confide  
My soul to Him who never built on woe  
A single canon though so much betide.

## V.

O Love, is thine a measure  
We must tread while yet we grow,  
Or forfeit else a pleasure  
No after age can know ?  
Doth manhood aye dissemble  
When with fervency 'twill bend  
And clasp *her* to a sterner breast—  
A lover and a friend ?  
No ; youth may glow with passion,  
But the fickle flame will bow  
Beneath the sneer of Fashion  
Or Ambition's sterner brow ;  
But the heart the world hath harrowed,  
Though it could not touch the core  
If its sympathies are narrowed,  
Will but love its chosen more ;  
And in sunshine and in sorrow  
Will love, shelter, and defend  
The gentle one in whom he found  
A lover and a friend.

## VI.

## THE SYREN'S ISLE.

“ Row gently, friends, there's sunshine on our course,—  
Life's morning mists are fading fast away ;  
Our hearts begin to feel the vital force  
Of genial pleasure brightening into day ;  
Row gently, friends ;  
How sweet the gale from yonder palmy Isle  
Comes murmuring down, the dimpled waters smile  
Beneath its touch, and heave to be carest,  
Like a young maid when mutual love's confest.  
Row gently, friends, thither our course we steer ;  
Why are we cautioned ? what is there to fear ?  
Blue seas around us, golden skies above,  
Joy at our hearts, and all things breathing love.”

Such was the song of youth, with heart sincere,  
Guileless nor thinking guile,  
As on the sea of life he gathered near  
The syren Pleasure's Isle.  
Light ran the blood his eager veins along,  
Bright was his eye, and cheerful was his song,  
His thoughts with freshest dews of life were fed,  
And hope enchanting hovered round his head.

Then cam'st thou, Fancy, queen of mysteries,  
And with thy hand of light,  
Held'st forth thy prism before his eager eyes,  
Clothing earth's meanest things with rainbow dyes,  
And gems as bright  
As through the dewy grasses of the lawn  
Radiantly glitter on the robe of Dawn.  
On tiptoe standing at the prow,  
Thou winn'st his eye,  
And beckon'st forward with thy radiant brow  
To where thy cherished pleasures lie.  
With sparkling look, and lips apart,  
And passion wakening all his heart,  
Forward he starts, and sees afar  
Pleasure on her gilded car,  
Nor turns aside his gaze from her delusive star.

And hark ! what sounds are these,  
So more than earthly sweet ?  
Wandering harmonious o'er the sunny seas,  
Steeping the soul in dream-like ecstacies,  
For angel lovers meet.  
Row on, row on ; why should we fear,  
When all in sight, and sound, and taste, is fair ?  
Row on, row on, yet nearer and more near,  
Age is unlovely, solitude is drear,—  
We've strength to spare.

“Come hither, youth ; life passeth quickly by,  
And age will come and steal the fire away  
That makes thy spirit soar so blithe and high,  
And, eagle-like, outgaze the orb of day ;  
Hither, come hither, ready to thy hand  
The golden cups of sparkling pleasure stand,  
Song shall entrance thee, wine shall warm thy blood,  
Earth's choicest dainties be thy common food,  
Bright eyes shall look in thine, soft hands shall press,  
And thrill thy soul with speechless tenderness.”

Row on, row on, oh ! wherefore should we fear,  
When all in sight, and sound, and taste, is fair ?  
Row on, row on, yet nearer and more near,  
Age is unlovely, solitude is drear,  
Why should we care ?

Alas ! whose whitened bones are those that lie  
On that dread shore ?  
What wrecks are scattered far and nigh,  
Enough to make the steadfast passer-by  
Weep evermore ;  
The brave, the generous, and the fair,  
Have found the grave of virtue there,  
More finely wrought, more quickly torn,  
The first to joy, the keen'st to mourn ;  
Some moments list they to the strain  
That lures them o'er the treacherous main,

Till onward, onward, by the rushing tide,  
Madly they're cast  
On pitiless rocks where ravening wolves abide,  
Where hope from human aid is all denied,  
And naught but mercy can redeem the past.

---

## VII.

I know no ill but hath its profit too,  
If from ourselves we could example take,  
And by old errors shape our course anew,  
As they who once were tangled shun the brake ;  
And therefore 'tis that when I lose my rest,  
And toss and tumble on a bed of care,  
Like a poor child on a dead mother's breast,  
This gleam of sunshine lightens all the air,  
That I am restless but to know unrest,  
And as the base degree deformity  
Shows beauty what it is, so to be blest  
Is garnered by to know adversity.

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## VIII.

## RAVELLA'S REVENGE.

## A SPANISH TRADITION.

The storm's in the forest,  
The olives are torn,  
There'll be floods in the Xelna  
Ere break of the morn ;

The rush of thick waters  
Grows fast on the ear,  
As the shadows of night  
Turn to phantoms of fear ;  
But the tempest without  
Is as summer's sweet breath,  
Compared with the passions  
That trifle with death.

Who is he that rides madly  
Through forest and flood ?  
Too brave to be base,  
And too proud to be good ;  
With bent brow, all bared  
To the tempest's wild din,  
And white lip set firm  
As the spirit within.  
Ride, John of Ravella,  
From fear thou art free,  
Since the wife thou didst cherish  
Was faithless to thee ;  
What reck'st thou of tempests ?  
Thy heart is a flame,  
Since the brand of dishonour  
Was set on thy name.

There's no foe like the felon  
Who comes as a friend,

The traitor, but known  
When too late to defend ;  
The graceful, the courted,  
With truth for his crest,  
Whilst the foul heart of falsehood  
Beats dark in his breast.

By the proud towers of Lora  
There's yawning a deep,  
Whence the torrent's scarce heard,  
Though it is but a leap ;  
Neither pine tree nor lichen  
Can cling to its side,  
Even the wind-carried moss seed  
Not long there can bide ;  
Rocks jagged by the torrent  
Shoot up at its feet,  
For the stronghold of horror  
Such sentries are meet ;  
There the stream once 'tis said,  
At an earthquake's deep shock,  
To caverns unfathomed  
Sank down through the rock ;  
Nor for years did its waters  
Rush back to the light,  
But traversed unfilling  
Those mansions of night.

Here restlessly wanders  
That falsehearted knight,  
Who came with a blessing  
But left with a blight ;  
Who gave up for pleasure  
What worlds cannot buy,  
The peace of a conscience  
Whose hope is on high.  
He hath wrecked too that fair one  
Who clings to his side,  
His child's at her breast  
But she was not his bride ;  
Those pale lips once pledged  
To another her faith,  
And a vow was then uttered  
To bind her till death.

On that fair brow was once clasped  
A jewel less bright,  
Than the glances that filled  
One true heart with delight ;  
On her finger so slender  
A ring once was seen,  
A gift held more dear  
Than the crown of a queen ;  
But the vow hath been broken,  
The jewel is gone,  
The bright looks are faded,  
And ring there is none.

He is downcast and sullen,  
Yet gleams in his eye  
The wild look when passion  
To frenzy draws nigh ;  
He looks up, and the blood  
From his bitten lip starts,  
To the proud soul stern justice  
No comfort imparts ;  
He turns to his victim  
And long is their gaze,  
Not their love but despair  
That cold meeting betrays.

Strange thoughts are upstirring  
His spirit within,  
This world lost, why should not  
Another begin ?  
He looked towards the torrent  
That echoed below,  
And wiped for a moment  
The damp from his brow,  
Repassed on thought's lightning  
The path he had trod,  
And gathered his heart  
For one cry to his God,  
When hark ! on the rocks ring  
The hoofs of a steed,  
And the pause of that moment  
Hath spared him the deed.

One cry from Ravella,  
One shriek from the dame,  
And they've met with that fury  
Death can only tame,  
All the long months of suffering  
And frenzy and hate  
Undammed on one moment  
Rush headlong to fate ;  
On the brink of th' abyss  
They are straining their might,  
Even the hard rock is splintered  
And glances with light ;  
They heed not the thunder  
That roars on that rock,  
Ha ! why are they sundered ?  
Why still at that shock ?  
The dark frame of Lora  
Hangs o'er the abyss,  
" If this be my fate,  
Thine too shall be this."

His death gripe on Ravella  
Is gliding him down,  
And fierce joy for a moment  
Gleams over his frown,  
The next all unnerved  
He grows ashy and cold,

For the lightning hath struck him  
And blasted his hold ;  
Down, down through the black mist  
The traitor is gone,  
And on earth the wild justice  
Of vengeance is done.

And there lies Ravella  
Thrown dead to the ground,  
But one instant of triumph  
His spirit hath found ;  
And she the ill-fated,  
Unhappily fair,  
The soiled flower of beauty  
Hath sealed her despair,  
Her dress hath she torn  
And wrapped heedfully round  
The poor babe whom she laid  
By a sheltering mound ;  
Then with eye lit with frenzy,  
And step wildly fleet,  
She hath reached her lord's corse,  
And fallen dead at its feet.  
The storm's in the forest,  
The olives are torn,  
There'll be floods in the Xelna  
Ere break of the morn ;

But thunder and lightning  
And tempest's fierce breath,  
All unheededly rave  
At the portals of death.

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## IX.

## THE MIRROR OF CLOUDS.

Come through the ages to th' Assyrian plains  
And suns that set four thousand years ago ;  
The waves of time recede, and like a tract  
Of desolate seabank leave the western isles,  
And all the peopled Europe of to-day ;  
A suckling wolf roams by the nameless Thames  
And bear-cubs gambol on the banks of Seine.

[*Scene, Babylon. A chamber in a lofty tower  
overlooking the city—Midnight. A Chaldean  
Priest is seated reading.*]

That which hath been was that which must have been,  
And that which shall be that which must be too ;  
Oh, whither hath this led me ? not to truth.

[*Rises and looks out.*]

Fair night, thy loveliness hath been to me  
Fatal as woman's, thou that woo'st the spirit  
Trustingly forth, until thy cold blue depths  
Become the home and fount of thoughts sublime,

That leave our days like poor unhearted things  
To limp and crawl unmeaning into graves ;  
I fear thee, Night, there's terror in thy beauty,  
For thou can't win me from my fellow man ;  
Yet hopeless wherefore fear ? I am alone,  
Hearts to my touch are but as coffin lids  
And sound as hollow, oh ! alone, alone,  
The heat hath passed, the moulded metal's cold,  
All social aspirations I've o'erleaped  
To fall I know not where—alone, alone,  
Yes, even with thee, thou gem of all this earth,  
Queen of the nations, Babylon the blest,  
Oh, tell me, if thy mighty heartstrings shake  
At touch of human thought or energy,  
When thou wert scattered fragments, and the spirit  
Which starting from thy womb controls this world  
Was yet a germ, when on a shadowless plain  
Hinds fed their flocks, and herds grazed on the place  
Where palaces have sprung ; ere thou, Euphrates,  
Proud minion of our grandeur sought'st thy home,  
Through marble archways, and by stairs of gold,  
Lit only by the melancholy stars  
That silent looked upon thy peaceful way,  
Like contemplation on a passing world,  
Was there a time when mortal eye could see  
And mortal tongue could tell thy coming greatness ?  
O desolate silence, sadder than the winds  
That moan through ruined halls where empire sat ;

I bring no answer from the hollow night,  
And I must rise to where we rise no more ;  
Home of all Wisdom, Birthplace of all Might,  
O Nature, Belus, Jupiter, or God,  
Thou being beyond all name to souls that yield  
Their life to adoration, thou that art  
The first and latest causes, and with whom  
To be is to know all things, hast thou writ  
On heaven or earth before the hour is born  
The deed that shall be ?—Oh my beating heart  
What life is this ?—there's something cannot die ;  
Oh come, for I can dare it, spirits, powers,  
Unclogged by mortal clay, whose essence is  
Less gross than sunlight, who have looked on man  
Since our first father raised his lonely face  
In wonder to yon stars, and since have watched  
The rising tide of passion till its waves  
Are numberless as now, come if ye own  
The strong communion of this world of ours ;  
And hold the spirit that plays about its dust  
For kindred with your own, come, I dare it,  
And call ye with the voice of friend or foe,  
For love or barter ; hear, oh hear, I dare it,  
Away with spells and necromantic charms,  
Blind pathways which the dupe and sorcerer tread,  
I stand alone,—a man without a tie,  
Whose hearth no smile, whose grave shall have no tear,  
Backed by th' unmelting ice of resolute will

To commune with ye.

[*Thunder peals.*]

Hark ! it comes, it comes,  
 The sacred fusion hath begun at last,  
 Even now my soul is lightened of its dust,  
 I see without its vision, hear without  
 Its hearing, thrill untouched ; the world is burnt  
 In extacy, and though the same in shape,  
 'Tis ashy, crumbling, dead ;—no earth is here,  
 Heaven rains in splendours on me, and the stars  
 Are lost in light from whence the stars were made,  
 As rain-drops are of ocean ; Unknown power,  
 I dare it—

[*Thunder is heard again, the Chaldavan falls in a swoon, and the spirit of Orion descends upon the tower.*]

Meet me then, O restless soul,  
 'Tis I, Orion, who was once as thou,  
 Thy thoughts have echoed through the universe  
 Though human ear beneath this fated tower  
 Had listened in vain ; I come, but love thee not,  
 And know thou ask'st as little as I give ;  
 Aspire and we are met—

And yet am I  
 A mortal still.

*Poor worm,*

[*Priest starting up.*]      Immortal too,  
 Proud spirit, that set'st a gulf of scorn betwixt us,

What more art thou ?

*The fire without the clay,  
The thing thou hast believed when thou hast stood  
From eve till morn upon some perilous height,  
Around whose base the tameless ocean raved,  
Lit by the frequent flash, and roaring wild  
Against the breaking thunder, dreadful music  
The desperate love to hear ; or when thou gazedst  
Unearth'd and wrapped into the starry skies  
That gave thee back with overpowering weight  
Of speechless awe, the sense of boundless power  
And human littleness, and gendered deep  
The faith that Nature held not there her hand  
When worms like ye were fashioned, toys of scorn,  
Proud of a little hour and gaudy wings  
Wherewith ye flutter o'er a shady pool,  
And call't the universe, each turbid brain  
Meting out its own space, centered with pride,  
That erring germ of judgment erring ever ;  
The fitness that ye find is nothing more  
To that this little earth, small as it is,  
Can yield to keener senses than the shoot  
Which sprang this morning to the sweeping woods  
The growth of centuries ; from the meanest atom  
A thing of use and beauty, through all shapes  
Familiar in thy senses to all changes  
Of thoughts sublime beyond the mothy flight  
Of thy imaginings all nature teems*

*For meet intelligence, that lightning ocean  
Round God's eternal throne.*

It must be so,  
Yet, fitful folly, I have thought no more  
Of sensible existence than the fall  
Of dust from yonder stone,

*Then was the voice  
Of Nature lost upon the roaring tide  
Of disaffection; hast thou not begun  
A sensible existence which will never,  
No never, end; you talk of fabrics  
Raised by men's hands or even these steadfast mountains  
And say they are the same; whilst man, poor man,  
In countless generations falls away;  
But raise thy soul to the dread contemplation  
Of that eternity which is thy due,  
And think this Being shall be still to be,  
When suns grow dim through mere antiquity;  
Oh say not then man's life is little worth,  
Thou hast begun a life shall never end,  
Thou hast begun what thou must ever be;  
But, child of error, come, renew thy spirit,  
And let this touch upon thy marble brow  
Unearth thee more.*

What glittering coil is this  
Thou crown'st me with? Ha! 'tis a living serpent.  
Be still, what dost thou fear?

Not this nor thee,

Nor earth, nor hell, with all its battled powers,  
Of malice fathomless ; I am akin  
To goodness infinite, and power supreme.

*'Tis well—now speak thy will, these thunder clouds  
That roll about us shall sustain for thee  
The vision of the future ; now, be strong,  
The threshold is o'erleaped, and thou art passing  
Into the fare, but one more step and life  
Hath yielded up its secrets to thy gaze  
Never to fade again—What wouldest thou see ?  
Assyria's coming kings—*

[*Orion waves his wand and a circle of light breaks  
upon the clouds, across it pass the forms of the  
kings of Assyria, ending with Sardanapalus.]*

*Behold them there,—*

*Startest thou at this ? Look, look, some gaze upon thee,  
With frown majestic, some with gladsome hope  
Lighting a haughty brow, some dark and dread  
As monumental marble ; art thou lost  
So soon ?*

O Extacy ! Hail, unborn kings,  
Whose glorious eyes proclaim ye of the line  
Nearest the gods, shadows of years to come  
Sublime in hope, now stamped upon my spirit  
As ye had lived already, bearing with ye  
The proud assurance of enduring empire  
For years uncounted and o'er lands untrod,  
How shall I greet ye through the fervid joy

(O fount long-sealed re-opened once again)  
Ye bring Assyria that its might and worth  
Shall live for ages, nay, shall never die;  
For when oblivion's heaped upon our walls,  
And mounds weigh down our long-dishonoured fanes,  
Then nations yet unnamed shall at this fire  
Light many a torch, and, glory to our race  
Beyond all glories of a thankless world,  
Illume their temples, palaces, and shrines,  
With that which first on fair Assyria's plains  
Shed forth its lustre; science shall not die,  
And art hath here an ever-burning lamp  
For endless renovation; I too, I  
Shall shine in our hereafter as a ray  
Unnamed but not unworthy; wondrous spirit  
In whom my faith would gladly see my fate,  
Though now these atoms bow to thee, once more  
Hear, and let thy far-darting sun illumine  
The hour when on the next of Nimrod's line  
The crown is set—

[*The interior of the temple of Belus with the ceremonial of the coronation of one of the kings appears.*]

Thus well hast thou begun—

*Beware—*

Thou see'st my thought, see'st thou a fear?  
Withhold me not—  
*Beware—*

Thou seest me passing  
Into the fane, come on—  
*Once more, beware—*  
Never, do this or nought is done, the lives  
Of kings and subjects countless as the stars  
May pass untouched, my own must bear for me  
An endless meaning ; high or low, in triumph  
Or misery, I will meet it ; let me see  
Myself to-morrow.

*Lo ! thy fate is on thee,  
And strife is past, behold the victory,*

[*The chamber of the Chaldaean appears mirrored  
before them ; the cold light of the morning  
shines upon a group gathered around a dead  
body ; as they lift it, the face is turned, and  
the Chaldaean, recognising himself, falls dead.*]

*One more awaits the morning ; be thy pride  
Buried insensate, since thou couldst not wait  
In peace and trustfulness ; was not the light  
Of many-coloured Hope, the ray that still  
Through Eden's barred and massy portals steals  
Down o'er the world, as yet enough for thee,  
But thou must meet the lightning in the eye,  
Brut thy poor skull against the pitiless crash  
Of an advancing world, and lift thy hand  
To drag the seven-times heated sun upon thee ;  
Scathed branch lie there, and when the rising spirit  
Of new existence brings thee bloom again,*

*Remember, that from Him who willed the worlds,  
To the last atom, is no place for pride ;  
For He hath no compeer, and all things else  
Stand on this level, that His lightest breath  
Can make them nothing ; Power which men call great,  
And greater yet than human senses span,  
Is not one link more near the source of power  
Than a child's grasp, the infinite's between ;  
Yet, as with thee, on on the infection spreads,  
Through aspiration, till the noblest spirits  
Grow cankered at the top ; redeem it, Heaven,  
Or, known, acknowledged still, 'twill never change.*

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## X.

Hail, Heaven-relying Truth, whose heart  
Is safe, as is the sun above,  
From Envy's most malignant dart,  
For God to thee is ever Love ;  
Thou wert ordained, ere angels fell,  
Through all creation's bounds, to be  
The guardian of a sacred spell,  
That lifts the struggling spirit free,  
Above the roaring tide of hell,  
And mire of poor mortality.

Thrones, dominions, all that bear  
    Here the scenic robes of power,  
What are they to lull our fear  
    In the spirit-searching hour,  
When the vision of the world,  
    Selfish pride hath for us plann'd,  
From before the soul is hurled,  
    And alone with God we stand.  
Be the world and all its glory  
    Hurled into the burning sun,  
Truth but then confirms her story  
    Of eternal honours won,  
Not by arts, whate'er their cunning,  
    Not by arms, whate'er their might,  
Not by wisdom's self though shunning  
    Every deed that dreads the light ;  
No, the first link of truth's chain  
    Is fixed against the Almighty seat,  
The other in a Saviour slain  
    Is cast at vilest sinners' feet ;  
Truth, that faith alone can know thee ;  
    In the wilderness of thought  
Fitful gleams awhile may show thee,  
    But they're gone as soon as caught ;  
These were followed in youth's lightness,  
    But their feverish days are done,  
Even as stars must lose their brightness  
    In the splendour of the sun.

## XI.

## SPES MORTUA ET REDIVIVA.

Why must increase of knowledge thwart our love ?  
Through searching to the dregs of what entices ;  
So doth the mind its own undoer prove,  
And foil its own ends by its own devices ;  
For he whose appetite hath lost its spring  
Carries a dead soul in a living head,  
As much upon his spirit's rioting  
Decay as 'tis when dust to dust is said  
Upon his ashes ; hence it is there walk  
About this world men whom we deem alive,  
They eat, they drink, they smile, look gay, and talk,  
But couldst thou neath this lighted surface dive,  
Think'st thou to find an equal spirit shed  
These outer beams within ? No, they are dead,  
The heart beats on, the blood flows to the brain,  
The mere mechanic motion halteth not,  
The eye may fire, the lip curl with disdain,  
Nay, the hand trace what shall not be forgot,  
But Hope, the life of life, hath passed away,  
'Tis but endurance animates their clay.

Arise ! Look up ! What light breaks from the skies  
Thou look'dst upon a lamp, behold the sun,  
What in his blaze are earth's dull sympathies,  
Its prizes garnered and its honours won ?  
The hope that hath an earthly goal must die,  
Its beauties tarnish, glories fade away ;  
But there's a nobler which shall lift thee high,  
When thoughts unseated from this weary clay,  
That is the germ, and that must perish all  
Before it quicken, this, oh happy truth,  
Woe cannot break, pain thwart, or guilt appal,  
For nought can turn the Saviour from his ruth,  
Then judge not harshly of thy present state,  
Though suffering rack thee, 'tis but thy desert,  
Do good and humbly wait upon thy fate,  
The hand that caused will heal again thy hurt,  
Thus may'st thou profit by what here's amiss,  
And win a better world in losing this.













